

## **Juvenile Crime Enforcement and Accountability Challenge Grant I Program Findings**

The Legislature established the groundbreaking Juvenile Crime Enforcement and Accountability Challenge Grant (Challenge Grant I Program) in 1996 to determine “what works” in reducing juvenile crime – both from the standpoint of the initiative’s impact on relevant outcome measures and its unprecedented approach to local juvenile justice. This effort supported the development of comprehensive local action plans for responding to juvenile crime, and the implementation of 14 demonstration projects aimed at reducing juvenile crime. The enabling legislation required the Board of Corrections (Board) to administer the program and to evaluate its overall effectiveness.

The Legislature invested \$61 million in the Challenge Grant I Program, and this initiative yielded significant – and lasting – returns not only for thousands of California youth and their families but also for juvenile justice systems across the State.

Of paramount concern to the Legislature was whether the Challenge Grant I Program would prevent or reduce involvement of high-risk youth in the juvenile justice system. The Board’s evaluation of the overall effectiveness of the efforts implemented by counties participating in the Challenge Grant I Program indicate that it did indeed work. This conclusion is based on the fact that:

- Challenge Grant I programs resulted in a significant reduction in the average number and the severity of post-program arrests. For example, during one reporting period there was a 16% reduction in the average number of arrests.
- Challenge Grant I programs resulted in significantly fewer juveniles receiving post-program sustained petitions and for less serious offenses. For example, during one reporting period there was a 16.5% reduction in the number of juveniles receiving sustained petitions.
- Challenge Grant I programs significantly increased the rates at which juveniles successfully completed probation, payment of restitution and court-ordered community service obligations.

Further evidence of the success of the Challenge Grant I Program is manifested in the number of programs that have been continued beyond the end of the grant period. The 14 demonstration projects involved a total of 28 different programs and over 12,500 juveniles; 75% of these programs are now being funded at current or expanded levels by counties.

The Challenge Grant I Program also changed the way local jurisdictions respond to juvenile crime by requiring comprehensive, collaborative and integrated planning and service delivery efforts, as recommended in the research-based *Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders* published by the federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

The Challenge Grant I Program produced a host of new strategies for responding to juvenile crime and delinquency. When implemented within the context of systematic and collaborative planning, these strategies proved effective in both preventing and reducing juvenile crime. The Challenge Grant I Program worked!